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DEPT FOR EUR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: UN AND CIS CONDUCT JOINT PATROL OF KODORI GORGE

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4(b) & (d).

¶1. (C) A joint UNOMIG-CIS patrol visited the Georgian-controlled Upper Kodori Gorge October 12, the first such international monitoring mission since Georgian forces re-established control over the area from local warlord Emzar Kvitsiani in July. Georgian Deputy State Minister for Conflict Resolution Ruslan Abashidze told us October 12 that the patrol seemed to have gone smoothly, adding that the Russians in the CIS contingent were in a "bad mood" because "nothing special" was happening. He said the monitors had asked questions about the presence of weapons seized from warlord Kvitsiani, but noted that this did not appear to be a major problem because the weapons were in a secure, guarded building and were clearly introduced into the region by someone other than the Georgians.

¶2. (U) UNOMIG released a statement October 13 summarizing the results of the patrol (e-mailed to CARC), which they said covered a "substantial area" of Upper Kodori. The statement said the patrol was informed that 550 Georgian law enforcement personnel were in Kodori; monitors checked the identity documents of some of these individuals, all of whom were found to work for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The monitors reported finding no deployed heavy weapons, although they did note that some of the weapons reportedly seized in the initial operation were heavy weapons; the statement cited six 120 mm mortars, six 82 mm mortars, a 76 mm anti-aircraft gun, an unserviceable ZSU 23-4 turret without a chassis, some MANPADS, and ammunition. The monitors asked Georgian law enforcement authorities for an inventory of these weapons so that their disposal could be jointly monitored. They called for regular patrolling of Kodori in order to sustain the transparency achieved through this patrol. Press reports quoted CIS peacekeepers expressing concerns about what they described as large stockpiles of arms.

TEFFT